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AUTHOR Brawer, Florence B.
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ABSTRACT

A national survey of 1,493 humanities faculty at 156 two-year colleges was conducted in spring 1975. The colleges included in the sample were carefully selected in terms of locale, control, emphasis, size, and age, and the faculty sample included proportionate numbers of full- and part-time faculty members. This paper compares history instructors in the sample to the total group of faculty. Sixteen percent (246) of the total sample were history instructors, the second largest of the 11 selected subgroups. As a group, the historians were fairly similar to the total sample. Most (82.9 percent) held their highest graduate degree in history. Most (78.5 percent) were male. Almost all (92.7 percent) were white/Caucasian. Many (31.3 percent) said they were working on doctorates. This represents the largest number in any one field indicating movement toward a higher degree, Forty-eight percent fell into the young or middle age groups, so it is not surprising that 38.6 percent claimed no previous experience as instructors of administrators in secondary schools, as compared with 41.4 percent of the total. Information on research, professional development, affiliations, and teaching duties is also summarized, and compared to the characteristics of the total sample. (Author/NHM)

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Florence B. Brawer

February, 1976

A nationwide study of two-year college faculty yielded data about history instructors. This paper details this information, comparing the instructors in history with the broader sample. The data were drawn from the above study conducted in Spring 1975 by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges, Los Angeles under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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WHO TEACHES HISTORY IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE?

A national survey of 1493 people teaching the humanities in 156 two-year colleges--carefully selected in terms of locale, control, emphasis, size and age--was conducted in spring 1975, by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges. The faculty sample was drawn to include proportionate numbers of both full-time and part-time instructors. Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the project revealed data on such constructs as concern for students, reference group identification, satisfaction, and preference for further preparation, as well as on demographic dimensions. In this paper the history instructors in the sample are compared with the total group of faculty in art, anthropology, foreign language, liberal arts/drama, literature, music, philosophy, political science, religious studies, and social/ethnic studies.

Sixteen percent or 246 individuals in our sample of humanities instructors taught history in the 156 sampled institutions. This represents the second largest group of people within the eleven selected subgroups, second only to those teaching literature. In some cases the respondent taught history exclusively; in others he also taught political science, and/or other social sciences. This doubling up pertains especially to smaller colleges and poses some problems in identifying people who are historians exclusively. By the same token, history also might be taught by an instructor who actually designates any one of a number of other specialties, (for example, the artist who may teach an occasional course in art history). Accepting this uncertainty,

however, we still believe that because of the careful considerations in developing the methodology for this study, what is reported here fairly accurately represents the many history instructors in two-year colleges throughout the country.

What then, are these 246 men and women like? How do they compare with the total sample of 1493 humanities instructors? Almost the same percent of historians (24.8%) as the total sample (25.1%) had formerly been students in two-year colleges. Overwhelmingly, most held their highest graduate degree in history--82.9%. As with all other specialties, most were males--in this case, 78.5% as compared with 66.7% of the total. The greatest percent fell into the younger age group, with 25.2% being 31-35 years (as compared with 20.3% of the total) and 21.5% (compared with 16.2% total) being 36-40. Almost all (92.7%) were white/Caucasian (90.6% total). Thirty-two point five percent claimed over 200 books in the homes in which they were raised and 26.4% designated 26-100 books (38.3% and 25.7% total, respectively). Many of these people said they were working on doctorates--31.3% as compared with 23.6% of the total. This represents by far the largest number of people in any one field indicating movement toward a higher degree.

Experience

Perhaps because so many historians in two-year colleges tend to fall in the lower or middle age ranges, it is not surprising that 38.6% claim no previous experience as instructors or administrators in secondary schools, as compared with 41.4% of the total. And yet, those who did claim such experience for 3-4 years and more exceeded the total in all cases. This does not apply to those who had had four-year college or university experience

beyond the level of teaching or research assistant. At this level, 54.9% had no such experience, almost exactly the same as the total (54.7%). Thirteen percent had 1-2 years at this level and 10.2%, 5-10 years, as compared with 11.6% and 9.4% of the total, respectively. As with the total group, the most popular period of time as a faculty member in a two-year college was 5-10 years (42.3% history; 37.7% total), followed by 11-20 years (14.6% history; 16.7% total) and 1-2 years (14.2% history; 13.4% total). The greatest number of history instructors had worked in their current institution for 5-10 years, followed by 15.9% who indicated 3-4 years. This is compared with the total group of 42.1% who also indicated 5-10 years and the 17% designating 3-4 years.

Chairpersons

When asked about positions as chairpersons, 67.9% of the history instructors and 66.8% of the total replied they had not acted in such capacities. Of the 17 (or 6.9%) who had had these responsibilities, 1-2 years was designated. Similarly, few (84.1%) had not been directors of special programs nor administrators (82.1%).

Of those who did claim current experience as a chairperson (14.6%), 61.1% said they had previously employed people with doctorates as instructors in their department or division and 80.6% reported no pressure either way to hire or not hire doctorate holders. In the future, 63.9% planned to so hire, although 36.1% indicated they would select the best qualified persons, regardless of degree. The most popular reason for not hiring these people is the fact that they command high salaries (13.9% so indicating). On the other hand, 30.6% claim they are fine/excellent/good teachers, 19.4% say their

performance is the same as that of other instructors, and 13.9% report that doctorate holders are generally good leaders with high professional qualities. In other words, the climate seems positive for the right person, whether or not he/she holds the advanced degree.

Teaching Hours and Full-Time/Part-Time Status

A number of reports about two-year college teachers emphasize the number of class hours taught weekly. While we might (and do) take the position that actual hours of classroom teaching only partially reflects the actual involvement in professional activities, still time is one objective basis for assessment. History instructors compare almost exactly with our total respondent group--for example, 32.1% of the total and 34.1% of the history people report 13-15 class hours of teaching per week; 17.1% total and 17.5% history indicate 10-12 hours, and 13.2% total and 14.4% history designate 16-18 hours.

As with other humanities groups, most (75.6%) history faculty members are full-time. About one-quarter (27.6%) are employed at a job in addition to their teaching, and of these, 29.4% designate 31-40 hours weekly. One to ten hours are represented by 23.5%, and 11-20 and more than 40 hours each by 19.1%.

Reference Group

When given a three point choice ("quite useful," "somewhat useful," and "not very useful") historians rank as "quite useful" sources of advice on teaching: first, colleagues, students department chairpersons, professional journals, university professors, programs of professional organizations, high school teachers, and last, administrators. The total sample rank the reference groups in the same order.

Professional Journals

Historians in two-year colleges are also much the same as the total group in terms of reading journals. Generally they read a few more scholarly journals and professional education journals within their specific discipline than do the total sample, and about the same number of general interest journals and magazines. But 21% claim to read no scholarly journals; 56% read no professional education journals; and 73% failed to indicate any general interest journals.

Professional Developments

All disciplinary groups favor taking steps toward professional development--ranging from the 73.3% who teach religious studies to the 90.9% who are in liberal arts/drama. With 85.9% of the total population so indicating, 86.6% of the historians attest to a desire for such development. And of the 213 who so indicate, 40.8% opt for getting a Ph.D. or Ed.D., 33.3% say they would like to enroll in university courses, and 10.8% desire obtaining a Doctor of Arts degree. When it comes to a free summer, exactly the same percentage of total and history instructors (52.8%) indicate traveling. In line of popularity are meeting classes or engaging in a workshop; doing research; and taking classes; studying/reading. Historians place considerably more emphasis on conducting research (15.9%) than any other disciplinary group (8.7% of the total population are so interested).

As for the type of training they would seek were they to begin all over again, the greatest percent of our history instructors are satisfied with their previous experience (36.6%, as compared with the total group--33.2%). In ranking the percentages so designating, we find our respondents would choose

to next study humanities and then do more student teaching, take more teaching methods courses, acquire business/technical skills, and study the social sciences.

Looking ahead, we find that most historians (82.1%) would five years hence consider doing what they are currently doing as most attractive. In terms of most popular as either a very or somewhat attractive choice, and in the following order, are: a faculty position at a four-year college or university, a faculty position in another community or junior college, a school outside the United States, an administrative position in a community/junior college, a position in a professional organization, a non-teaching, non-academic position, any position but this college, and least attractive, having no idea. These rankings may be compared almost exactly to the total humanities population.

Affiliations

Generally, historians fall above the total group in their affiliations with professional organizations. More are members, attended regional or national meetings, and presented papers at a meeting than the total population examined. As for their sense of group cohesion or relatedness to significant others, historians fall slightly above the total group in their relationships to teacher organizations and college adminstrators, the same in terms of most instructors at their school, and slightly below the total in their affiliation with family, friends, other instructors in their field, and students. Like the total, they are related to others in the following order, most to least: their group of friends, family, other instructors in their field, most instructors at their school, then students, teacher organizations, and college administrators.

Students

Historians are very much like other humanities respondents in terms of the qualities they think students should gain from a two-year college education. They rank as most important a knowledge of and interest in community and world problems and, second, self-knowledge and a personal identity (which are second and first choices respectively, for the total); otherwise, their ordering is in accord with the total group.

We find consistency too regarding the numbers of courses historians and the total group feel that students in two-year occupational programs should be required to take. On the whole, they opt for six or more courses as most desirable, then four, three, and two. Fewer history instructors than total humanities people indicate no humanities courses should be required for occupational students.

Half the historians feel there are enough films offered to students as out-of-class presentations in the humanities. But most indicate there are not enough colloquiums and seminars, exhibits, concerts and recitals, and lectures.

Extra-Curricular Activities and Curriculum

Like the general sample, over half the historians experience the humanities by attending art museums, exhibits, concerts, the theatre and films. A few less indicate reading (46.3% as compared to 50.0% total) while records/TV/radio, attending classes and seminars, traveling and talking with associates are also noted. In terms of community service and church work, they are very slightly above the total population.

However, they are slightly below the general sample when it comes to

noting that humanities courses in their colleges had been added or improved, or even in desiring such changes. More than the total, they do point to improvement in facilities and materials in their colleges during the past seven years and to more extra-curricular courses. More than any disciplinary group other than anthropology and religious studies, they say they would like to see the humanities integrated into interdisciplinary courses. Interestingly, especially in light of the fairly low sense of relationship to administrators, very few historians responded to the open-ended question, "What changes would you like to see effected (in the humanities)?", with a desire for more administrative support for the humanities.

The Colleges

Almost all (90.7%) our 246 history instructors were teaching in public two-year colleges, and 91.5% were in comprehensive institutions. A few were in vocational/technical (4.1%) and liberal arts colleges (4.5%). Equal numbers of these instructors (43% were in colleges that were built in 1960-1969 or 1959 and earlier. The greatest number (19.5%) were in colleges of 2500-4999 while next most represented were schools of 5000-7499 and 1500-2499 students. About two-thirds of these colleges were single campus institutions.

In Sum

The 246 instructors who comprise the history sample of this study represent 16% of the total humanities population. They are fairly similar to the total sample--variations being slight but sometimes of interest in terms of future planning.